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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the effect of repeated readings of the same connected text on students' attitude toward reading and their reading fluency, determined by accuracy and speed. Forty-two subjects (25 second-grade and 17 third-grade students) from 2 self-contained classrooms in rural Ohio participated in the study. The pretest-posttest control group experimental design was utilized. The "Attitude toward Reading Scale" was group administered to all subjects as a pretest and posttest. Three graded reading passages from the "Basic Reading Inventory" were orally read three times each by students in two treatment groups (visual feedback, no visual feedback) in both classrooms. The control group in each classroom performed independent reading activities. Results indicated no evidence of a difference in mean attitude toward reading among the three treatment groups. Results also indicated that while speed increased with each repeated reading of a passage for all three passages, accuracy increased with each repeated reading of a passage for only one of the three passages. (Three tables of data are included.) (Author/RS)

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# The Effect of Repeated Readings on Elementary Students' Attitude Toward Reading

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of repeated readings of the same connected text on students' attitudes toward reading. Also investigated was the effect of repeated readings on fluency, determined by accuracy and speed. Forty-two subjects (25 second grade and 17 third grade students) from two self-contained classrooms in a rural Ohio school participated. The pretest-posttest control group experimental design was utilized. The Attitudes Toward Reading Scale was group administered to all subjects as a pretest and posttest. Three graded reading passages from the Basic Reading Inventory were orally read three times each by students in two treatment groups (visual feedback, no visual feedback) in both classrooms. The control group in each classroom performed independent reading activities. Results indicated no evidence of a difference in mean attitude toward reading among the three treatment groups. While speed increased with each repeated reading of a passage for all three passaged, accuracy increased with each repeated reading of a passage for only one of the three passages.

Common approaches to reading instruction have included phonics, linguistics, sight word, and language experience (Moyer, 1982). Phonics involves learning individual letters and then matching them with corresponding sounds. Linguistics goes a step further by presenting sets of similar words which vary only slightly from one another. The sight word approach gives focus to the whole word as a unit without regard to individual letter-sound patterns. Language experience is based on the natural spoken language of the child. Through dictated sentences, the child provides the vocabulary words to be studied (Moyer, 1982).

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Repetition in some form is a necessary component in any reading program. Redundancy, a concept derived from information theory, restricts the amount of material presented, reduces the possible number of response alternatives, and increases the repetition of words or phrases within stories. Though traditional reading instruction provides sufficient redundancy for most children, other children require a greater degree of redundancy to understand the relationship between the written and spoken language. Instruction through repeated readings, exact oral repetition of a contextual whole, offers the greatest amount of redundancy (Moyer, 1982).

In recent years, researchers have performed a number of studies to investigate the value of repeated readings as a strategy for improving reading achievement. Evidence has been found to show that the technique of multiple oral readings can be a beneficial instructional tool for both the beginning and the more mature readers in the regular classroom (Dowhower, 1989). Samuels (1979) noted that viewing written records of gains in fluency actually motivated students to seek further improvement, and Rashotte and Torgesen (1985) found that increases in speed were usually achieved with each reading.

Dowhower (1987) found that the use of repeated readings was not a new instructional technique in the field of reading education. Actually, it was a procedure that was used at the turn of the century. In the last decade, renewed interest in this method has been shown by researchers and reading practitioners. Though many terms have been used to describe this approach, the common goal has been to increase fluency by orally rereading a contextual passage. The components of

fluency are accuracy (accurate word identification) and speed of reading.

The method of repeated readings was considered to be a basic study skill which could easily be implemented in any classroom environment (Herman, 1985). The method provides a means of practicing reading to improve word identification and decoding skills. This, in turn, frees students to concentrate on the meaning of the text. A general understanding of the passage after the initial reading may assist a student in identifying words in context during subsequent readings (O'Shea, Sindelar, & O'Shea, 1985).

One expressed concern regarding the use of repeated readings has been that the repetitiveness may result in student boredom or the development of a poor attitude toward reading. Estes (1971) stated that "how students feel about reading is as important as whether they are able to read, for, as is true for most abilities, the value of reading ability lies in its use rather than its possession." The least researched area of attitude toward reading has been that of early primary students. Teachers of primary grades ranked the importance of attitude development in reading instruction as second only to activities for checking comprehension (Heathington & Alexander, 1984). Though an expressed concern among teachers, attitude development has not always received high priority within reading programs, and such studies could provide clues to the development of reading attitude and its relationship to reading achievement (Alexander & Engin, 1986).

Given that student attitude toward reading seems to be an important factor worthy of consideration before implementing any

instructional technique, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of repeated readings on students' attitudes toward reading.

## Method

### Subject

The subjects for the study were 25 second grade students and 17 third grade students from two self-contained classrooms. There were two sections of second grade and three sections of third grade in the building. The rural northwestern Ohio school district had an enrollment of 310 in kindergarten through fourth grade. Of the 42 subjects in the sample, six second grade students and two third grade students were enrolled in the Chapter I Remedial Reading Program. One third grade student received tutoring services in the reading area in addition to the regular classroom instruction.

### Instrumentation

To assess attitudes toward reading, the *Attitudes Toward Reading Scale* (Deck & Barnette, 1976) was administered. The scale is a self-report measure which can be group administered. It consists of 29 statements which are read aloud to the respondent. The first seven items ask for descriptive information. Items eight and nine are samples. The remaining 20 items are considered for scoring purposes. The respondent marked one of three choices (not really, a little, a lot) in a Likert format to show agreement or disagreement with a statement. Numerical scores are attributed to each response in the positively worded items (1 for not really, 2 for a little, 3 for a lot) and the negatively worded items (3 for not really, 2 for a little, and 1 for a lot). Scores range from 20 to 60 with a high

score indicating a positive attitude toward reading and a low score indicating a negative attitude.

Previous research on 150 primary students produced an internal consistency reliability coefficients between .85 and .90 (Deck & Barnette, 1976). Cronbach coefficient alpha internal consistency reliability for the pretest and posttest in this study was .89 and .93, respectively. In a previous study a multiple regression procedure was used to determine the degree of relationship between expressed attitude and a composite of six reading behavior and environment variables. The statistically significant correlations provided some evidence of the validity of the attitude scale and supported the existence of a strong relationship between expressed reading attitudes and reading behaviors.

Treatment

A pretest-posttest control group experimental design was utilized in this study. The subjects were administered the *Attitudes Toward Reading Scale* as a pretest in one 20 minute session. After the pretests were scored, the subjects' scores in each class were ranked from highest to lowest. The students with the three highest scores were randomly assigned to three treatment groups: feedback, no feedback, and control. Subsequently the students with the three next highest scores were randomly assigned to one of the three treatment groups. This process was repeated until all 42 students had been assigned to one of the three treatments. Treatment began the next day. Students in the control group performed their regular reading assignments and received no treatment. Each subject in the feedback and no feedback groups orally read the first unfamiliar graded passage

from the *Basic Reading Inventory* (Johns, 1978) to the classroom teacher. The teacher recorded the child's fluency in reference to the number of words read correctly (accuracy) and the length of time in seconds involved in reading the passage (speed). The accuracy score was obtained by subtracting the number of oral miscues from the total number of words per passage and dividing by the total number of words. Miscues were defined as errors of omission, insertion, substitution, mispronunciation, reversals, words aided, repetition, and self-correction. Students in the feedback group were allowed to view two separate graphs displaying their personal scores on accuracy and speed. No verbal feedback was given. Students in the no feedback group did not see their scores, nor did they receive verbal feedback. The procedure was repeated a second and third time for the same passage in different sessions. A series of three passages from the *Basic Reading Inventory* at the same grade level were orally read by each subject and evaluated in the same manner. The three passages were evaluated with both the Frey and the Spache readability formulas. The readability ratings for the selections at second grade level were 2.0, 1.9, and 2.0. Third grade passages rated 2.3, 2.7, and 2.4. The repeated readings treatment was administered on an individual basis for nine class days. On the day following the nine days of treatments, the *Attitudes Toward Reading Scale* was group administered in a 20 minute session as a posttest.

## Results

A one-way analysis of covariance was performed (alpha = .05) to determine if a difference in post mean attitude toward reading existed among the three groups of subjects following the repeated readings

treatment. The covariate was the pre attitude toward reading score. The resulting $F$-ratio of 0.08 and $p$-value of .93 indicated that no evidence of a difference in mean attitude toward reading existed among the three treatment groups (Table 1).

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of the Three Treatment Groups on the Attitudes Toward Reading Scale

| | | Pre | | Post | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | N | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. |
| Visual Feedback | 13 | 49.3 | 6.6 | 48.8 | 6.2 |
| No Visual Feedback | 14 | 48.3 | 8.1 | 47.0 | 10.0 |
| Control | 15 | 48.1 | 8.0 | 47.5 | 9.7 |

A two-way analysis of variance with repeated measures on the trial factor was performed (alpha = .05) on each of the three passages. No significant differences were found between the visual feedback and the no feedback groups with respect to speed and accuracy on any of the three passages. The resulting means and standard deviations are presented in Table 2. To determine if speed decreased and accuracy increased over the three trials for each of the three passages, six one-way analyses of variance were performed on the 13 subjects from the feedback treatment group and the 14 subjects from the no feedback treatment group combined (Table 3).

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Speed and Accuracy of the Two Experimental Groups

| | | Feedback (N = 13) | | | | No Feedback (N = 14) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Speed | | Accuracy | | Speed | | Accuracy | |
| Passage | Trial | M | S.D. | M% | S.D. | M | S.D. | M% | S.D. |
| 1 | 1 | 94.5 | 66.6 | 92.3 | 6.3 | 88.0 | 55.2 | 93.2 | 3.3 |
| | 2 | 72.7 | 58.0 | 94.6 | 5.4 | 70.1 | 40.9 | 96.2 | 3.8 |
| | 3 | 71.6 | 50.3 | 94.3 | 6.9 | 68.5 | 40.1 | 95.2 | 2.3 |
| 2 | 1 | 113.6 | 91.5 | 91.4 | 10.3 | 110.4 | 63.4 | 94.6 | 4.6 |
| | 2 | 89.6 | 58.5 | 93.1 | 6.4 | 80.6 | 41.6 | 96.3 | 2.4 |
| | 3 | 70.6 | 48.0 | 93.4 | 8.7 | 73.0 | 38.2 | 95.5 | 2.7 |
| 3 | 1 | 92.8 | 57.1 | 92.9 | 10.3 | 95.9 | 60.0 | 94.6 | 3.7 |
| | 2 | 81.5 | 51.4 | 93.4 | 9.4 | 79.9 | 49.8 | 95.4 | 3.3 |
| | 3 | 69.8 | 54.2 | 93.9 | 9.9 | 69.1 | 38.1 | 96.7 | 2.8 |

The results of the analyses in Table 3 indicated that the mean number of seconds to read the passages decreased over trials for each of the three passages. Post hoc analyses indicated that, in general, the time to read the passages decreased significantly with each subsequent reading of the passage. The analysis of variance of the accuracy scores revealed that the accuracy increased across trials for passage one only.

Table 3

Analysis of Variance for Speed and Accuracy of Passage Trials

| Passage | Trial | Variable | Mean | S.D. | F-ratio | Prob | Post Hoc |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | Speed | 91.1 | 59.8 | | | 1 > 2 |
| | 2 | Speed | 71.3 | 48.9 | 15.61 | .00* | 1 > 3 |
| | 3 | Speed | 70.0 | 44.4 | | | |
| | 1 | Accuracy | 92.7 | 4.9 | | | 1 < 2 |
| | 2 | Accuracy | 95.4 | 4.6 | 13.19 | .00* | 1 < 3 |
| | 3 | Accuracy | 94.8 | 5.0 | | | |
| 2 | 1 | Speed | 112.0 | 76.6 | | | 1 > 2 |
| | 2 | Speed | 84.9 | 49.7 | 23.09 | .00* | 1 > 3 |
| | 3 | Speed | 71.9 | 43.4 | | | 2 > 3 |
| | 1 | Accuracy | 93.1 | 7.9 | | | |
| | 2 | Accuracy | 94.7 | 5.0 | 2.83 | .07 | N.A. |
| | 3 | Accuracy | 94.5 | 6.3 | | | |
| 3 | 1 | Speed | 94.4 | 57.5 | | | 1 > 2 |
| | 2 | Speed | 80.6 | 49.6 | 18.59 | .00* | 1 > 3 |
| | 3 | Speed | 69.4 | 45.6 | | | 2 > 3 |
| | 1 | Accuracy | 93.8 | 7.5 | | | |
| | 2 | Accuracy | 94.4 | 6.9 | 2.47 | .10 | N.A. |
| | 3 | Accuracy | 95.4 | 7.2 | | | |

N.A. Not applicable because overall F-test was not significant

* Statistically significant because $p \leq .05$ alpha level

## Discussion

The results of this study provided no evidence that repeated readings decreased nor increased students' attitudes toward reading. The data with respect to fluency indicated that speed increased for each trial repeated reading of a passage for all three passages. The results for accuracy showed an increase in accuracy for each trial repeated reading of a passage for only one of the three passages.

The finding of an increase in speed after repeated readings is in agreement with other research studies done in this field (Rashotte & Torgesen, 1985). While those researchers also noted an increase in accuracy after repeated trials of a passage, this study did not produce the same results. Only passage one showed an increase in reading accuracy. This may be due in part to the uncontrolled variable of days off between treatments. The repeated readings for passages one and three were interrupted by weekends which fell between repetitions. The time lapse may have affected students' performance on the next repetition. Scheduling consecutive days for repeated readings of one passage is recommended for future studies. Increasing the number of passages to be read, thereby extending the treatment over a longer period of time, may provide more accurate data as a basis for conclusions.

While students' attitudes toward reading did not improve as a result of repeated readings, neither did they decline; thus, the use of repeated readings may be a helpful reading instruction strategy to increase reading speed without causing a concomitant decrease in attitudes toward reading.

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